

# INTEGRITY

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Subject ~ Art and Morals

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## EDITORIAL



HE worship of culture is the most insidious of the modern idolatries. Whereas a faint disdain is still felt for the man who lives for money or who centers his life around his belly, we give only admiration to those refined ones among us whose delight is in the fine arts, and we even hasten to agree with them that the creative genius is beyond good and evil, emancipated from all except literary and artistic criteria, and nowadays rising even above them.

"Why do you recommend *The Naked and the Dead* since it is obscene?" someone recently wrote (in effect) to the book reviewer of the *New York Times*. The reply was typical of the ill prevailing liberalism: "The author is a gifted man and therefore he can express as and what he pleases. It is up to the reader to be solicitous of his own morals, if he is vulnerable, but on the whole one's character ought to profit from this glimpse of 'real life.'" Perhaps the fact that the *Times* felt it necessary to defend its position is indicative that its amorality is no longer firmly entrenched. Let us hope so anyhow.

There is this much to be said for the fine arts as such. The treasure we derive from them tends to be more spiritual than carnal. Yet our higher nature, too, must be subordinated and ordained to our final end in God, and we sin only the more if we rely on reason or aesthetic appreciation. Lucifer's sin was not carnal. How sad it is to see intellectual, cultural atheists sitting transported as they listen to a Carnegie Hall concert. Or to hear that the Italians, whose men never go to Mass any more and whose women to the family wash on Sunday, wait hours in line for standing room at the opera. Or that another Catholic college graduate is reading the latest banned novel.

On the other hand one winces to see Catholic truth so often veiled by mediocre writing, and God's house so often cluttered, synthetic and ugly. Is there any necessary connection between morality and the fine arts and, if so, what is it?

Christ came to make us holy. Holiness is infinitely above culture, as it is above economic well-being, and the knowledge of natural phenomena. Nevertheless, because holiness rectifies our natures as it elevates them, so it has a natural by-product of temporal peace and beauty, including a flowering of culture. Sanctity

is not dependent upon art (or upon anything except grace) but is always followed by culture. True art can also aid the work of grace, as chant purifies and orders the passions, and as statues of the saints should aid true devotion. We see both processes going on in the Church today. A spiritual revival is producing a new Catholic art which in turn is helping the spread of the new life in the Church. This revival of true art is beginning to leaven the field of the secular arts too, not excluding the movies and radio. Yet it will probably be a long time before creative artists cease to be temperamental anarchists.

If an omelet is poorly cooked but made of good eggs, it has at least something to recommend it. But if the eggs are rotten the omelet will be bad absolutely, so that you cannot even discuss the culinary skill of the cook except abstractly. Plato knew this. That is why he proposed to put the poets out of his ideal city (not because what they wrote was not beautifully expressed but because it was untrue). When our editors and reviewers and readers learn that a book or a play which is untrue or obscene is bad absolutely we shall have re-established a friendship between religion and culture. It is in an effort to hasten that day that we have devoted this issue to morality and art.

#### THE EDITORS

We are reminded again of the friendly bond that we have with our subscribers by the generous manner in which you have supported our gentle hint to give INTEGRITY as a Christmas gift. All of us who work on the magazine are very grateful for your prayers, your letters, and your kindness in so many instances. Therefore, it is not lightly we express the wish that God will send you many blessings throughout the coming year of Christmas 1949.

ALL OF US





# Art, for Goodness Sake

The cry of "Fire!" in a crowded theatre can't be expected to be received in a spirit of quiet inquiry. A man, third row center, is not likely to ask, "Indeed, and where is the fire, may I ask?" Certain words carry with them their own entourage of mischievous reactions. Art is one of those words. Merely mention the word "art" in any gathering and you are bound to be misunderstood. The way that "art" appears to most people is much like one of those ice-bedecked fishing schooners you see in the news reels returning from a blizzard off the Grand Banks. It looks like some fairy concoction, all covered with glittering impedimenta, so much so that it is hard to imagine the hidden contour of the ship itself.

## The Cult of Art

To those on the outside the world of art appears to be phony. Simple people, for good reason, are scornful of the fuss that is made about buttering paint on canvas or making adult mud pies. Intelligent people, for good reason, are tired of reading obscure tracts defending irrational paintings and discordant music. Others, who thought they had a flair for the thing, went to art school and came disgusted by the air of calculated Bohemianism that is generated by the elect anointed with linseed oil.

The same art nonsense covers the music world like a glittering coat of Christmas tree ornaments. Music that pleases is regarded as milk for babies. Those who face up to music manfully, taking their due portion of meat, look upon as significant the slight attempts of an orchestra to imitate the sounds of collision between two men, one carrying a brace of frightened pigs, and the other carrying a stack of various-sized pie plates.

The "Pops" concert, Nutcracker Suite enthusiasts, who enjoy an occasional symphony, though snobbishly "High Church" in their musical rubrics, are just as responsible for the art nonsense. They may sneer down their aquiline noses at this discordant generation, but, as in so many other cases, the waywardness of today's children may easily be attributed to the sentimental dotage of their parents. It was the Vienna waltz and cut-glass chandelier crowd who launched the myth of artistic divinity so that playing the fiddle and painting the Thames at twilight became the prerogative of gods and supermen. The cults of Shakespeare, Dickens, Wagner, Wilde, Whistler, and Brahms were the long-haired progenitors of the cults of Picasso, Shostakovich, Epstein, Saroyan, Rita Hayworth and Dizzy Gillespie.

Bestowing as we do so generously upon the masses the blessings formerly reserved for the privileged, Hollywood has brought together in their ubiquitous salons Joe the ice-man and his wife Marie with the artist-gods of the day. We needn't collect many tickets stubs to find out that Hollywood no longer peddles art goods. It peddles artists. Mrs. Van Glitterbucks of half a century ago used to invite a few people *who did things* over tea, and according to the degree of their popular canonization she also did her social stock go up. Today the Hollywood mogul sets "Bogie," Esther, Betty or Ingrid rampant on a field of celluloid and the customers thrill to the optical and audible intimacy, lacking only one privilege that Mrs. Van Glitterbucks had—to touch them.

There is an historical progression from James Boswell to Alexander Woolcott to Louella Parsons. Boswell began the fashion of contemplating the artist. He, so to speak, founded the monastic order of artist-contemplators. Thanks to Boswell there are more people who know Samuel Johnson than have the slightest idea *why* they should know him. Boswell was the Abraham from whose lines sprang the strange race of artist biographers and art critics. These were the men who tried to bridge with words the ever-widening gap between the people who made things and the people who tended machines. The artists just had to be explained to the merchants and the machine tenders who themselves were artistically sterile. The distinction between the classes was that of less-than-men and supermen. The relation became that of cult—idols and worshippers.

At first some attention was given to the artifact—the thing made. More and more the attention shifted to the artist. With the era of Alexander Woolcott, you hear much about the artist offstage, de-turpented, and away from the piano. He wrote of artists as Gheon wrote of saints. Everything they did simply oozed *significance*. Mrs. Pat Campbell's childish whims were as significant as the Cure d'Ars' penances. It mattered little to Woolcott in what the greatness of the artist lay, that he (or she) dwelt upon Olympus was all that mattered. The fact that Tyrone Power liked Chesterfields is the kind of senseless irrelevancy that the masses inherit from the artist-cultist.

Louella Parsons' "exclusives" which follow the Sunday evening eruptions of Winchell's hot and cold flashes, are the bright blooming flower of this art nonsense tradition. We have canonized the artist because he is the one who can scoop a hole in the quiet jelly of our mediocrity. He defies the mundane gods with worship. He is unconventional, a free man. He acts as we would



it if we feared no law, no retaliation. He likes his work. He is dedicated to the task he does. Some of this is fact and some fiction, but the thing that is settled is that the artist breathes a more purified air. For that we have enshrined not only his genius but also his charm, his wit and his preference in neckties.

### Art in Fact

That is why, when the package labeled "art" is delivered into the conversation it is many times its proper size. We must remove the false labels and tinsel. Layers of devotional literature and obnoxious columns must be peeled off, not to exclude old back numbers of *Silver Screen* and *L'Illustration*.

Then when we finally get to the contents we can hardly recognize it. It is something quite different from what we expected. For art in essence is nothing more nor less than the human making of things skilfully. It may be the making of shoes, or the making of sonatas, or the making of false teeth, but it is just making—that's all! One branch of making is the making of things that satisfy our spiritual needs rather than our physical needs. These are called the fine arts. If we could see more precisely the job that the fine artist sets out to do we might strip him of the halo he doesn't deserve without taking away from him the respect due any man who does a good job in his chosen field.

### How Do the Fine Arts Affect You?

One of the facts we pass over when taking inventory is the fact that the fine arts affect us *more* than any of our other sensible experiences. A character we have seen treading the boards of a stage imprints a firmer impression on our minds than a character we may meet in real life. Fabricated personalities such as Hamlet, Poland, Mrs. Miniver, Raskolnikov, Major Barbara, or Captain Jack stick with us. Pictures we have seen in art galleries, and the feelings generated by musical compositions firmly imbed themselves in our memories, much more than impressions or experiences of real life. The fact that children are greatly impressed by the movies is not surprising at all even though they may have enough time being impressed by what Sister told them about the Council of Trent. This is precisely what a work of art is meant to do. A work of art ties our experiences together in such a way to make them more understandable. That is why a work of art enlightens us.

How does it delight us? It delights us by being appropriate and *just right*. An example (though a superficial one) of this rightness is the way we delight in a bit of theatrical dialogue. Our own experiences in real life have been mostly unhappy as

far as dialogue is concerned. Of course, we always say the right thing to ourselves but about ten minutes after the conversation is over. The playwright, however, makes his characters say the right thing every time.

Much that we do or experience in our daily merry-go-round seems pointless. On the stage every gesture is significant, every prop has a purpose. A poem or a painting or a musical composition has the same significant relation of parts. Every dab of paint, every note or pause, every stress and inflection moves us logically toward the resolution in the artist's mind. In our daily lives we make mistakes, we stammer, we retrace our footsteps, we get into senseless and unnecessary detours. The work of art avoids all of these. Things move smoothly, logically, precisely, efficiently to the end set by the artist. The artist whether he is a poet, painter, playwright, sculptor or composer, takes nature as we experience it every day, and he cuts away all the things that *don't fit or make sense*, then he molds what is left into a pattern in which everything goes together.

We as men hunger for God, and in God all things go together. A good work of art which puts things together *just right* (according to our sense of what is just right) should give us a nostalgia for God and for heaven, in Whom and wherein all things go together perfectly.

We are made more happy by the fitness of some things than by the fitness of others. In real life we enjoy finding a shoe that fits our foot, but we are more delighted by finding a friend that fits our need for companionship.

We are even more delighted when we see the fitness of things in relation to Christ's redemption, because we see that this is more important to our ultimate happiness. The work of art that imitates nature may deal with a superficial fitness or a deep and profound fitness. You may, for instance, recall with delight the aptness with which Winslow Homer portrayed a portion of New England seacoast. This delight though very real is comparatively superficial because it is related to the delight of seeing the reality itself. A New Englander would probably enjoy the painting much more than a Floridian. On the other hand, if you listen to a Mozart sonata, you will sense in it a fitness that is inexpressably close to your very humanity. Mozart has devised an order of sounds and pauses that resolve a conflict or a sense of unfitness that lies deep within us. We rejoice at hearing a unified pattern of sounds that precisely fit an inner desire for the tranquility of right order we need.



The delight that comes from good art is a therapy for our notions. Our little irrational anxieties, uncertainties, fears, and the consequent inhibitions, are swept away when we sense the beauty that goes with rightness and goodness. The artist through his medium seems to say to us, "See how easy it is to do the right thing. See how very *possible* beauty can be. Life does make sense after all." The therapeutic value of good art is that it *does* not appeal directly to our reason, because when we are in need of such therapy our reason has been blackmailed by our emotions and can't control them. It straightens us out by working on our emotions but in a way that is not displeasing to our reason.

A third effect of good art is to dispose us to meditation on the subject it portrays. This, for instance, is the purpose of devotional art, whether painting, sculpture or music. The fitness that we are asked to behold is the fitness of some divine mystery. Few of us can think of divine mysteries without starting with a picture to our imagination. As we progress in prayer this may be less necessary, but, even then a picture or crucifix or statue can help to center our attention on heavenly concerns. The artist in his choice of order and arrangement may press a button that will ring a bell in heaven for us—the fitness and order of his work in some way like the fitness and order of the mystery on which we want to meditate.

### When Is It Good Or Bad?

Works of art are meant to be effective. We who are moved by them are affected and affected seriously. If a piece of music or painting provides us with a sense of fitness which we failed to find elsewhere, then it is obvious that we are affected much more by the work of art than we are by the experiences elsewhere. If works of art *make sense* out of our experiences, then it is the work of art that carries the most weight in our convictions. Consequently, it is important that the art be good and not bad.

It is old stuff that we have good and bad tendencies. A work of art may confirm us in either our virtues or our vices. Suppose, for example, we are low in spirits and decide to go to the theatre for a pick-up. If the play is a bad play (this doesn't necessarily mean that it is "dirty") it will leave us with the feeling that our despair has a foundation in fact. We are assured by the playwright that life is an unresolved game of contending forces in which we are the pawns. In like manner the modern art galleries are cluttered with jibbering canvasses that testify convincingly but falsely to despair, irrationality, and the unredeemability of man.

The bad artist is unable to make sense out of life. He is unable to give nature the order that conscience and reason demand

so he cuts a piece out of his own despair and hangs it in a gallery or divides it into parts and makes a play out of it. Another tactic of the bad artist is to abuse our emotions rather than straighten them out. Some of the works of Tschaikowsky, much of Brahms and almost all of Wagner, are in this category. Listening to the music it were as though we were thrown on the table of an overzealous masseur. We are blasted by the brasses and tickled by the strings. The wood winds shriek and grunt. The tympanist beats us unmercifully about the head and neck. We are carried slowly up a stairway of ascending chords, stand for a moment on the brink of a silent chasm, then we roller-coaster down a dizzy progression which ends in a revolving barrel of sounds that gives us no chance to get our footing. When we are carried out our nerves are either as limp as dish rags or as taut as violin strings. Such art (and it has its counterpart in the theatre and gallery) does not expurgate our emotions but merely ties them in knots. The treatment is that proper to a lost weekend.

Another, and not the least, of the effects of bad art is to call our attention to the artist rather than to his subject. Hollywood suffers from this sort of thing. Most of their releases are no more than walking, talking advertisements for their glamor boys and girls. The defect, however, is at its worst when it is a defect in religious art. Here, if anywhere, exhibitionism should be avoided and the artist be satisfied to remain anonymous. The direct opposite of humble anonymity is the fare currently purveyed from many choir lofts. The composer vies with the soloist, the soloist vies with the choir, and the choir vies with the organist to see who can impart with most convincing vigor, the depths, the heights and the breadth of the emotion they feel for God, the saints and Our Blessed Lady. The sparks that fly from your hair and the vibrator that cavorts up and down your spine at such a performance, are in no way related to piety, no more than if they had been caused by the sight of an aerialist driving a bike along a high wire stretched across the nave. The presence of such artistic talent at Mass is one of the more unfortunate coincidences of history.

The same virtuosity speaks less violently but just as plainly from the various artifacts that usually clutter our churches. If it were a thing that could be measured, we might be surprised to know how much harm these bad artifacts do. It is not unlike that their distraction from a true appreciation of what Christianity *really is* rivals the evil done by the arts condemned by the Legion of Decency. At least the church art is in a place where it can do the more harm.



Happily, both for religious and secular art there is a trend in the right direction. Thanks to such groups as the Catholic Art Association, we are evolving a criteria for good art, and we have a greater supply of good artifacts than are (alas) sought after. Perhaps as before in history, the patronage of the arts by the official and lay Catholic will set a standard not only for devotional but for secular arts. Considering the desperate state of art as a consequence of modern secularism, it is doubtful if any but Christian artists can redeem it.

ED WILLOCK



CULTURE VULTURES

# Art and the Moral Order

A correct approach to the question of the relation of fine art and the moral order presupposes at least a brief understanding of some fundamental points about fine art. Without an agreement upon some fundamental points, no specific issue or question can be satisfactorily resolved. A discussion on the Legion of Decency is a case in point. The Catholics who support it often do so without much rational basis and, although this may be sufficient for them individually to operate, it certainly leaves others unconvinced. There are also some Catholics (and undoubtedly a majority of non-Catholics) who tend to regard, at least implicitly, a Legion of Decency as a more or less provincial and out-moded moral censorship arbitrarily imposed within the domain of art. The one accepts the relation of art and morality uncritically; the other dismisses, just as uncritically, any relation between art and morality. It need hardly be added that in either case there is little or no analysis of fine art itself. Such specific issues as these, then, will never be satisfactorily resolved without some critical analysis of fine art itself, which we shall try to suggest in brief outline here.

## Art Imitates Nature

A primary point about all art, and about fine art in a special way, is the principle that art imitates nature. This principle has been so widely misunderstood that a little clarification is necessary. Imitation is not to be confused with copying, a confusion which has arisen because some have misunderstood Aristotle's original enunciation of this principle. Now, imitation in fine art involves both a progression from the thing imitated as well as a progression from the artist who is producing a likeness (and not a copy) of the thing imitated. Those who tend to emphasize only one of these progressions to the exclusion of the other misunderstand the very notion of art at the outset. In fact, neither can be eliminated in the actual production of the work of art (despite what the artists sometimes say, for artists are not always reliable in their theoretical accounts, whereas in their actual productions, the good artists instruct us). For example, those who claim theoretically to eliminate the "thing" imitated, merely take a very narrow view of the "thing," for they suppose this means reproducing some natural thing just as it is.

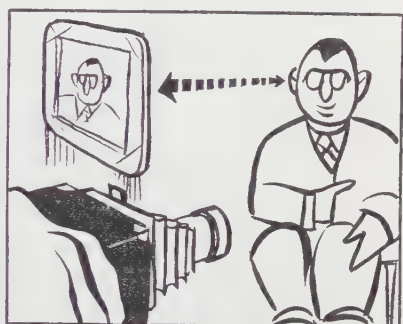
But—to take an obvious example—a painting of a man arises or proceeds both from the man painted and from the artist who is painting. A photograph, consequently, differs from a painting in that a photograph properly proceeds only from the man



photographed; the camera merely reproduces. This indicates that there are really two origins of imitation in fine art. In the example given, the imitation first begins with the man painted, and if this were the only origin of imitation, imitation would be reduced to copying. But the more proximate and proper origin of artistic imitation is the *idea which the artist has* of the man whom he is painting, and it is this idea which is realized in the painting.



IMITATING NATURE



COPYING NATURE

## Art Is Creative

Thus, fine art imitates in the sense that it produces something like an individual which *could* exist. The individual which in fact exists is not produced by the artist, but by God and nature. It may be said, then, that the artist is creative in an analogical sense. Only God creates in the proper sense of the term, for God's creating is the making of something from absolutely nothing, which is the proper sense of the term. Man cannot create in this way; he only forms a given matter. But we can call this "creative" by a likeness insofar as there is a real origination on the part of man and involves an origination use of the imagination.

This precision of the term "creative" when applied to man prevents that undue exaltation of human genius that is too often characteristic of various schools and theories of art, and which has tended to distort the proper notion and role of fine art in the life of man and in his education. It has been the basis for the cult of human genius in fine art. Admittedly, the "creative" fine artist is a gifted man, but he remains a man and, in essential respects, a very normal man. But, along with the general worship of man in various ways in recent centuries, the composer, the poet, and the painter have come to be regarded as something of a divine genius, unmeasured by normal human standards. Perhaps it is

advisable to recall here that Bach had some twenty children and that Rossini thought his cooking was on a par with his music. Furthermore, the current loose use of the term "creative" leads to errors in the analysis of fine art, and to doctrines of voluntarism and emotionalism. The artist becomes a law unto himself, justifying any extravagance by his "creative" freedom. This tends also to supplant the essential note of art as an intellectual virtue in favor of "inspiration" as the principle of operation where "inspiration" turns out to mean little more than an excited emotional state. The good artist on the contrary, has the developed habit of making; this is his fundamental "inspiration."

### **Art Perfects Nature**

Art in imitating nature confers a perfection upon nature. The hammer, to take an instance in servile art, is a better instrument for hitting a nail than a hand. In fine art, the artist seeks to produce an individual (or some aspect about it) as this individual could exist and not as it actually exists. This involves introducing something universal about the singular object produced in art. Thus, Shakespeare creates Hamlet, not merely as an individual who in fact exists, but as a type of man realized in this individual Hamlet. In this way, the artist seeks to confer an intelligibility upon the singular and give it a perfection which the singular alone does not possess for us.

Now the proper object, in general, of imitation in fine art is human action, passion, or thought. This is evident inductively insofar as the great works of fine art represent human objects (or at least objects as they are made to conform to human knowing and appreciation). This is most evident in drama and literature, or in poetics generally. Poetics produces the most intelligible objects of imitation through the means it uses, action and words, and consequently more readily reveals that the proper object of imitation is some representation of human action, passion, or thought. We can arrive at this same point analytically by seeing that since man clearly wishes to know and be delighted by the imitation in fine art, it follows that the object of imitation must not be too low (must not center primarily in objects less intelligible than man) for then there would not be sufficient knowledge nor delight; nor must the object be higher than man, for the same reason. Insofar as such objects enter into fine art, they are made conformable to human perception and understanding; they become, as it were, "humanized," more or less successfully, whether they are dandelions, urns, so-called abstractions, or angels. Fine art, consequently, is very properly and uniquely human, which is why



works of fine art can be enjoyed, in varying degrees and in one form or another, by men in general.

### **Art and Beauty**

Further, the work of fine art should be beautiful in at least some minimum way. The beautiful, in its broadest sense, has been defined as that which pleases when seen. In this definition, "seen" means not merely vision through the bodily eye, but an intellectual grasp of the order and splendor of the parts in an object and of the proportioned whole which these parts form. This intellectual grasp is then "pleasing"; it arouses delectation in the will and in the sense appetite. Thus, we "see" in a work of fine art the proportions of a singular object in which something universal is realized, and this very knowing "pleases" or delights the will and the sense appetite. We are here stressing the contemplative aspect of fine art, since we are considering beauty, which is related more to the cognitive power of man. Of equal importance in fine art is the purgation of the sense appetite which, in fact, is the more proximate aim of fine art.

Thus we can call, for example, a painting of a human face beautiful to the extent it is a proportioned whole realized in a singular object and in which something universal, as a type of character, is realized. This consideration of the beautiful prevents beauty being taken merely relatively. It is true that there is something relative insofar as the work of art *pleases*, for what pleases us is in part determined by various subjective elements. Yet insofar as the work of art is an *object* known, there is something quite objective. We cannot deny *what* an artistic object is, for it is presented directly to our knowing powers. We may, however, delight or not delight in it; we may or we may not conform to it. But we cannot deny whatever intelligibility it has. We know what Tschaikowsky's "Pathetique" Symphony is; we may or may not conform to the way in which it seeks to move our passions. And as will be evident later, a moral principle also enters here insofar as what *pleases* us is in part dependent upon the rectitude of our will and emotions.

### **What Are the Fine Arts For?**

Finally, we can now state the end or purpose of fine art. This is equivalent to asking why fine art exists or why man desires fine art. It is clear from what we have said so far that fine art exists because man delights in the works of fine art, that this delight follows upon a certain type of knowing found only in fine art, and that the experiencing of fine art produces a recreation in the most formal sense of the term. There is, therefore, a contempla-

tive end in fine art, the knowledge which is gained through the imitation. There is also the recreational end, the delight taken in the "seeing" of the imitation with the arousal and release of the emotions consequent upon this "seeing" of the pleasing object. Hence, man delights in what he knows through art and his emotions are aroused and purged accordingly.

### Art and Morals

With this brief and admittedly incomplete survey of the principles of fine art, we can approach the question of the relation of fine art to the moral order. In fact, this relation has been implicitly present in the very analysis of fine art. For to the extent the object of imitation in fine art is human action, passion, or thought, a connection with the moral order is at once apparent. We know, from the science of ethics, that every human act as human is *ipso facto* a moral act, and insofar as a human act is represented in the proper object of imitation, fine art is concerned with an object of imitation in which moral principles are also concerned. In some works of fine art this is more evident than in others. It is more evident in a play or in a movie where the imitation of human action is so direct and obvious. Yet it is also the case in music where the movement of the emotions is imitated through the human voice or through the sound of various musical instruments. For human emotions move either in conformity with reason or against reason, and to the extent music imitates this movement, a moral principle is also involved in music.

However, this relation of fine art to the moral order can be easily misunderstood. There are, in fact, two extremes to avoid. One extreme denies any relation between works of fine art and moral principles. The other extreme emphasizes a relation to the extent that it subordinates fine art to morality without qualification and, in effect, "moralizes" art.

The truth contained in the latter position is, as we have seen, that insofar as works of fine art imitate human action, a moral principle is necessarily entailed. But the truth in the former position is that artistic principles are not to be identified with moral principles. The work of fine art is first and foremost a product of artistic knowledge and technique; it becomes subject to a moral consideration to the extent it is concerned with human action, passion, or thought. Unfortunately, historically this has been seen usually as a conflict. We must try to see, rather, precisely in what the relation consists and to indicate that the conflict and opposition arises from misunderstanding the nature of this relation.

It must be made clear, at the outset, that *this is not a question*



of the morality of the individual artist, whether maker or beholder; we are not here concerned with passing moral judgments on the individual artist. But we are concerned with what the artist holds *intellectually* as moral doctrine. For every man takes moral positions, whether true or false, and what he holds intellectually about the moral order will influence what he produces in *fine art*. For example, an artist who aims at seducing the intellect through an undue excitation of sensuality communicates to us something about the moral doctrine he holds as well as his idea of beauty. An author who seeks to move us to *sympathize* with what is evil, thereby confounding the good with the evil and the evil with the good, is clearly influenced by a moral position—for example, a position which holds that vice is frankness and virtue is hypocrisy. A composer who seeks to infinitize the emotions, as is the case with the full-blown romantic, holds, as a moral position, that there is no limit to the excitation of the emotions, i.e., that reason is not the ordering principle of the emotions. (On the other hand, an artist who thinks he is not to move the emotions at all has not yet grasped the elementary notions of fine art.)

In precisely what, then, does the relation of fine art to the moral order consist? The relation to the moral order flows from the relation the work of art has to its object of imitation. The most perfect imitation achieved in fine art will be the imitation of man's actions, passions, and thoughts *as they are well ordered*. Beauty arises from the splendor and order of parts in an object, and the splendor and order in human action, passion, or thought arises from the order established through virtue. Consequently, for example, if the action imitated is not the action of a man in whom virtue is established, such an imitation, as produced in the work of art, will be imperfect insofar as a sufficient intelligibility, unity, and order producing beauty is lacking in the object. There will be a lack of beauty in proportion as there is a lack of splendor and order in the artistic object. Aristotle's insistence upon the good man for the tragic hero illustrates this. Clearly, the tragic hero must be a man in whom virtue is established, otherwise there is no tragic effect in the downfall of such a man through a disproportionate defect.

At the same time, we must also recognize that virtue, the principle of order in human acts, is still not the proper or immediate principle of fine art. Artistic principles and moral principles still remain distinct. But it can be said that the object of imitation in fine art, to the precise extent it is human, must be virtuous in the sense that the virtuous is the best ordered and the

best ordered object is that which manifests the artistically beautiful. Or—to restate this slightly—it is the order in an object which makes it pleasing to contemplate and virtue produces this order in human acts. It is this order which is imitated and which primarily constitutes artistic beauty.

### Well-Ordered Art Imitates Well-Ordered Humans

It is in this way that we can see the necessary connection of works of fine art have with the moral order without compromising the legitimate distinction between the two orders. For although virtue, as the principle of order in human acts, does enter into the determination of the artistic object, nevertheless this relation does not identify art and the moral order and, of course, still leaves distinct the two intellectual virtues of art and prudence. The man who is prudent or the man who is morally rectified is not necessarily a good judge of art and the good artist is not necessarily well established in prudence. But in any case the relation between the work of fine art and the moral order remains: what is fully good as a work of fine art will also be in conformity with sound moral principles. It does not follow, however, that because a work of fine art is in conformity with sound moral principles that it will be good art. But it does follow that if a work of fine art violates sound moral principles, it will also be bad *as art*, even if the technique should be marvelous.

Perhaps one more clarification should be made. While it is true that the order established by virtue provides the most perfect object of imitation in fine art, this does not mean that *only* the good is to be imitated. The evil as evil can be imitated, often as a necessary condition for the proper development of the whole artistic imitation. The imitation of the evil as evil is sometimes necessary to bring out clearly the imitation of the good. It is only the confusion of the good with evil and the evil with good that constitutes bad art as well as unsound moral doctrine. And herein, at the same time, arises a necessary distinction between art and the moral order. On the basis of sound moral doctrine, we are never permitted to do or imitate evil. But in the order of art, evil not only can be imitated, but sometimes should be in order to produce the proper artistic effect and the proper purgation of the emotions. Thus, in tragedy evil must necessarily be imitated in order to bring about the overthrow of the good, and we call this tragic precisely because the evil, though proportionately small, does overthrow the good. And clearly, the intelligibility of tragedy presupposes the good as the primary object of imitation.

Brief as this exposition has been, it serves to indicate the

need of first understanding fine art itself and its proper principles before considering any posterior question—even such a question as the relation of fine art to the moral order. Within these brief limits, it has not been possible to go beyond a rather general statement of the fundamental principles of fine art, nor to have specified more concretely the relation of fine art to the moral order. However, it should be evident that the consideration of such principles and notions as have been outlined here are indispensable both for the correct stating of the more specific problems as well as the resolution of them.

### **The Legion of Decency**

We mentioned in the beginning the Legion of Decency as an example of a specific question concerning the relation of fine art to the moral order. On the basis of the distinctions made, it should be clear that a Legion of Decency is thoroughly legitimate, especially for movies where the relation to the moral order is so evident because of the more obvious imitation of human actions. Actually, the only business the Legion of Decency concerns itself with is the moral consideration and, as we have seen, this does no violence to fine art, for if a movie is bad on moral grounds it will be bad as fine art as well, regardless of any technical excellence. The Legion of Decency is not passing formal artistic judgments. It does not determine what movies are good in the proper artistic sense; the movies which are classified as A-1, as is quite clear, are not necessarily good movies artistically. Hollywood, in fact, appears to have very little concern in making really artistic movies. But precisely because there is the relation of fine art to the moral order, and because Hollywood producers are so little interested in good art, the Legion of Decency is both justified and necessary.

### **A Positive Good**

It is important to note that something like a Legion of Decency arises because the quality of art itself is poor and because people are not well established enough in virtue to be sufficiently aware of the moral evil when it appears in bad art. (In the case of the comic books, for example, people in general were loath to admit any connection with the moral order until their children—who especially love to imitate—began committing robbery, suicide, and murder.) It is, nevertheless, regrettable that people tend to see only something negative about a Legion of Decency whereas, basically, it should be an instrument for establishing in a positive way good fine art.

The Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, Bishop Lawrence J. Shehan, made this positive point clear recently.



The trouble with such organizations as the Legion of Decency is that they begin with a great burst of energy and enthusiasm, often born of indignation. They win certain victories—accomplish some notable results—then the enthusiasm and the energy wanes. As a matter of fact the work of such organizations to be truly effective must never cease. And that work, on the part of all who are interested in its results, must not be merely negative, it must be positive. The most obvious work of a positive nature all of us can do is to encourage good pictures and good literature—and the most obvious way we can do this is to reserve our patronage only for that which is good. Consider what would be the effect of such a general attitude on the moving pictures. If the people of the country, or any considerable portion of them, would refuse to patronize any but really good pictures, the producers would make and would continue the effort required to turn out only pictures which are really worthwhile. Our attitude must be not to be content with pictures that are merely unobjectionable, but to patronize only those which are positively good. And we should be guided by the same principle in the purchase of books and periodicals. That is the only way we shall ever achieve any desirable standard in either literature or entertainment.

This positive approach means knowing and using both true artistic principles and true moral principles, and recognizing that sound moral principles help to determine positively what is good in art. For, as history reveals, the quality of art in a given culture is intimately related to the spiritual and moral quality of the people as a whole. It is not surprising, then, to note that there is little great art at the present time, and that this is proportionate to the spiritual and moral mediocrity of the times.

JOHN A. OESTERLE, T.O.P.

## Better Homes for Christ

The ineptitude and vulgarity of our church furnishings are a constant source of bewilderment to many people. Why should things that are made to be aids to devotion be so unholy in themselves? We know that in old days such things were all real works of art, and that museums of art today are glad to snap up for their collections almost any religious objects that they can find from the Middle Ages. And most of us realize that a curator would be highly amused at the idea of exhibiting in his galleries the statues and paintings, the chalices and vestments, that are sold nowadays in our church furnishing establishments. Why is that? The uses to which these things are put are the same as they were in the thirteenth century. Why, by the standards at least of artists and museum people, are the old things beautiful and venerable and the new things vulgar and repellant?

Is it perhaps merely that the old things *are* old, and that a romantic nostalgia for "the ages of Faith" makes their products seem more lovely than they actually are? Or have they become beautiful by the action of time, their once garish colors now harmoniously jaded, their once crude surfaces smoothed down, and a patina of age making them gracious to the eye? To most of us the old oaken bucket is a more beautiful object than the new chromium one, but is it really so, and was it so when it came from the cooper's shop all those years ago? Or is the answer that certain ages are prolific of geniuses, and other ages not, our age being one in which the knack of making beautiful things happens to be rare? Or is it that the old cathedral builders and fresco painters and tapestry weavers tried harder than we do to achieve beauty, and therefore succeeded better? Or were the artists of old time all saints, like Fra Angelico, and the makers of church equipment today all sinners? Or did the ancients have better materials or better tools than we have, or better ways of using them, methods that are now "lost arts"? Or what?

I think that most people would answer "yes" to one or more of these questions, but that those who have really studied the problem would have to say "no" to all of them, at least as basic solutions. It is true that there is a tendency to see beauty in the unfamiliar and the ancient and to be blind at the same time to the beauty of everyday things of our own day, especially when society does not label them "beautiful." But the museum man that I have pictured as sneering at our sugary statues and offensive metal-work is not the stout fellow that I take him for if he is fooled by

this sort of old fashioned romanticism. After all, this is 1948 and the "modern" movement in art has been with us for at least half a century. He who has been schooled to see beauty in the steel suspension bridge, in the airplane's wing, in the factory chimney, is not going to be deceived in his aesthetic judgment by dust and cobwebs, and "how well I remember the days of my childhood." If our church decorations had a little more of the new chromium bucket about them, he would probably respect them more than he does.

The argument about "genius" does not stand up any better. There is no lack of men today who can produce beautiful things. A modern cup-defender is no less lovely—probably more lovely—than a ship of the Middle Ages. We have fine dramatists and poets. Our music is cast in new forms and serves different purposes from the old, but no one can say that at its best it is not beautiful. We have plenty of artistic geniuses, and opportunities for them to get to the top, whereas the arts of the Middle Ages were the arts of the common man. The architecture of medieval Europe was not the product of isolated geniuses, but was, as has been well said, "a hundred men thick." Geniuses seem to have been few and far between.

Still less was the old beauty the result of trying hard to achieve it. As far as can be judged from the evidence at hand, including the few medieval discussions of the arts that have come down to us, artists in the old days were extraordinarily indifferent to beauty and to aesthetic considerations. They speak of the purposes for which things are made, and put special emphasis on techniques, but seldom or never even mention beauty. They seem to have believed, in the favorite phrase of a modern Catholic artist, that if you "look after goodness and truth, beauty will look after itself." If a thing is fitted to its end, and is what it purports to be, it will look as it should look, i.e., be beautiful. It is we moderns, with our theories of aesthetics, and art appreciation courses, and art schools, art collections and galleries, that are the earnest pursuers of beauty which seems to evade us almost in direct proportion to the avidity of our pursuit.

And there is as little reason to think that all medieval artists were saints as there is to think that all producers of modern church goods, whether factory hands or factory owners, are rascals. It is not as simple as all that. Villon was a medieval and a fine poet, but he was hardly conspicuous for sanctity, poor man. And it is the whole point of the Jocist movement, as I understand it, that saints may be developed in factories. And surely it should



be no more difficult to be a saint in a factory turning out tons of plaster statues of Saint Therese of Lisieux than in turning out tons of vacuum cleaner parts, or what haven't I. As has been said, "an artist may be a rascal, and a saint may be a fool, but an artist cannot be a fool any more than a saint can be a rascal," or words to that general effect. The virtues of art and prudence are not so simply in opposition.

And least of all is it true that the old producers had better facilities for shaping them, than we. The exact opposite is the case. Imagine a modern architect or engineer trying to design and put up a building today without paper, without pencils, without transits and steel tapes, without concrete and steel, without any mathematics beyond rudimentary arithmetic and Euclid, without a system of writing down numbers less clumsy than the Roman ones. Just for fun try multiplying LXIV by XCVIII without reference to our Arabic system, and see how far you get. No, we are a thousand times better off for materials and tools of all kinds than were the artists of the Middle Ages. If techniques were as hard for the modern painter or sculptor as they were for his medieval forebears, there would be few today stalwart enough to practice those arts.

No, the answer lies elsewhere. It is a simple answer, and one not difficult to understand. It concerns the *why* of production. What purpose have people in mind when they make things? If I paint a portrait or write a poem, what good do I propose to achieve by so doing? There must be some motive or there would be no motion. Of course, there are all sorts of reasons for doing things but they can be roughly classified. Some we call primary and others secondary. The secondary reasons are not necessarily bad. They are only bad if they are put forward as primary, if they become insubordinate to the master reasons. If we act on the strict principle of the primacy of the primary, all will turn out well. If we accept the easier doctrine of the primacy of the secondary, all will turn out ill. Now the primary reason for making things is the love and service of God and of neighbor. That is to say that if we make things because they need to be made, we serve both God and neighbor at once. People need things for their bodies—food, clothing, shelter—and they need things for their minds, and for their spirits also. To minister to all these needs in those for whose welfare we are responsible is the duty of every man and woman. The achievement of the purpose of a truly needed thing is the first reason for the making of that thing. By achieving that good we serve both man and God.

But there are secondary goods which the maker is justified in considering. He may work for the good of the thing he is making, and at the same time he may enjoy that work for itself, and even make the achievement of that joy a secondary aim. Artists rejoice in the skill of their hands. "All their desire is in the work of their craft," says the inspired author of Ecclesiasticus, whether they be plowmen, carpenters, engravers of seals, smiths or potters. In addition, the master enjoys the recognition of his skill by others. This too is a secondary motive, but reasonable enough if kept in its place. The doctor's love for his patients is a nobler reason for sacrificing himself for them than his consciousness that they need him, depend on him, and cannot get along without him. Nevertheless, it would be a harsh moralist who would deny the hard-driven doctor this secondary satisfaction as long as he keeps it secondary. As a wit once remarked, praise is like tobacco: it's all right if you don't inhale. A real physician cannot allow himself to give what he knows is the wrong treatment no matter how much demand there may be for it, and no matter how unpopular his right action may threaten to make him. And again the same is true in the matter of money. The workman is worthy of his hire. He is right in insisting that he be paid. But the real professional asks for his fee in order that he may be able to go on working. It is the commercialist who works so that he may go on being paid. The surgeon who does a careless appendectomy because his patient is a free case is not a professional man but a quack. Money is legitimately and necessarily one of the artist's ends, but only as a secondary one. His first end must be the good of the work to be done.

There we have the great distinction between the sacred and secular attitudes to life. The man who takes the sacred view, be he Catholic or Protestant, Christian or pagan, puts first things first and acts for the love of God and of man to the best of his knowledge and belief. He has due regard for the values of power, pleasure, reputation and money, but he keeps these values in their proper and subordinate place. The man who takes the secular view is he who puts power, enjoyment or money first and foremost, and thus denies his duty to God and neighbor. A clear grasp of the distinction makes many things understandable that are otherwise confusing. And among others is this matter of church adornment. For our churches are furnished almost exclusively by two groups of people, a large group and a small, and the orientation of each of these groups is thoroughly secular.

The large group is that of the commercial furnishers. Their fundamental mistake is to substitute profit, which is a secondary motive, for the primary one of the good of the work itself. From this source flows all the ills of this type of production. Things are not made as they are by artists, "the slow, fastidious folk whose care is matched by their disdain of time," which is as well as they possibly can be, but well enough, or badly enough, as the case may be, to insure a profit. To make sales things are made to suit the supposed taste of the average and indiscriminating buyer, whose intelligence factory designers may underrate. This causes a still further debasement of the taste of the devout by accustoming them to sentimental and pietistic shoddy, and by associating vulgar images with noble aspirations and true doctrines. "Giving the public what it wants" is not the least of the crimes of the commercialist. As money is the dominating motive, mass production is necessarily adopted, for though most things cannot be made better by machinery than by hand, they can be made cheaper so. The designs chosen are therefore not those which are the best, but are those which lathes, presses and other machines can turn out most rapidly. On account of competition with other commercial firms, who face the same problems of mass production, mass distribution and high selling costs, materials must be cheapened and all sorts of fakes employed. It is unnecessary to elaborate here what is familiar to us all. The industrial system was developed not for the good of the product, but for the enrichment of the controller of the means of production. Commercially motivated work is always bad.

The small group is that of the studio artists. Although there are sometimes money seekers among these, the secularism characteristic of the group as a whole is not commercial, but is aesthetic and exhibitionist. The secular artist is not typically a money maker, but he is usually a thrill seeker and a seeker for fame. He so much enjoys the production of beauty, and talking about it, and he so much enjoys the building up of a name, or the hope of it, that he forgets what he is here for. He forgets that he is on earth to serve God and man. He forgets that his duty in life is not to enjoy the thrill of beauty or the thrill of praise as a maker of beautiful things, but to make the things that human beings need. It is hard to blame him when we consider how he has been jockeyed by circumstances into the mental situation he now occupies.

A learned English Jesuit once said that "industrialism has robbed the artist of the opportunity of making anything useful." The posturings and aestheticisms of secular artists are a direct result





*"It's some new-fangled*



*called gothic."*

of this robbery. Just as an ill-bred child who has never been taught to help her mother and who therefore lacks the feelings of security and establishment that the sincere praise and real gratitude of her mother would give her, and lacking this natural happiness tries to draw attention to herself in all sorts of ways—making faces, contradicting, turning hand springs on the hearth rug, and falling over the guest's feet; so the artist robbed of the natural feeling being necessary to society, no longer happy in the simple-hearted esteem of his neighbors, is up to every sort of self-exhibitory trick and may become a real social nuisance. He is sensitive to beauty and finally convinces himself that the enjoyment of the beauty of a thing is a valid reason for making the thing, and that the enjoyment of aesthetic pleasure is actually a religious exercise. He has succeeded in selling this unfortunate doctrine to secular society in general, including Catholic society and apparently a considerable proportion of the clergy. Although he has his good points, for which he must be given credit (he has a good eye and knows a good painting when he sees it), he deserves no praise for his basic frivolity. For him the real purpose of art is fun—high class discriminating fun. If a picture is well painted, he finds it "amusing," and this goes for a picture with a religious subject as well as any other. If he is hired to paint a religious picture himself, he brings to his task his ingrained conviction that painting is fundamentally to give pleasure. He is basically indifferent to the use to which the picture is to be put, though this use is his primary interest to the man who hires him. He is determined that his work shall be well painted, original, praised and a means to his lasting fame. If he is skillful, he succeeds in giving his work the qualities that he himself values, and is honestly pained if his devout patron is not equally pleased with it. But the patron is apt to see something wrong, though he may not be able to put a finger on it, and the next time he buys images for a church wall may find him going back to Barclay Street as the lesser of two evils. The products of money-seeking secularism are horrible enough, but at least they are not aesthetic. Barclay Street sells no "amusing" crucifixes.

What is the practical answer? What is the buyer of church goods to do? Well, probably his first duty is to face the facts, and admit the truth about the situation. On the one hand he finds commercial and sentimental art producing a sugary kind of unhappiness, and on the other he finds aesthetic and exhibitionist art producing a sour kind of unhappiness. Let him acknowledge the good that is to be found in each type. The work that comes from



the factory at least tries to satisfy the want for which the thing is made, though it does this stupidly. We are not all the imbeciles at the church fittings we buy would make us out to be. On the other hand, the work that comes from the studio, though contemptuous of ends, does try to achieve perfection of form. The artist does try to do his best. The Catholic of intelligence and good will must first and foremost recognize the elements of this situation, and try to get the best out of it while avoiding the worst.

And he can try to spread an understanding of these truths regarding sacred and secular arts.

Again, in his own buying, he can patronize Catholic artists who are not secular (they do exist) and by giving them work both enrich the Church and help their members to increase.

Last of all he can, in many cases, many more than he may suspect, make the necessary thing himself. For that is how the arts began. Adam and Eve did not hire people to make things for them. They made them themselves, or went without.

GRAHAM CAREY

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### Man's Shadow

Man is too confused to understand himself  
Or his destiny.  
He is a voice  
Echoing across the wide valleys of time—  
A shadow cast upon space.  
And because he is afraid  
He builds great empires of possessions,  
And seeks therein security  
And sanctuary from the dark void of his soul.  
He cannot or will not remember  
That the father of his race  
Is not himself,  
That the shadow he casts  
Is not of himself but of God.

CLINTON O'NEILL

## Is It Devotional?

Our parish church was destroyed by a bomb in 1940; having rescued as much church furniture as we could from the ruins, we were housed in the first-aid post recreation room, and later in the local art school. After hostilities ceased the government kindly allowed us the materials to build a prefabricated church, but left us to put it up. Fortunately the congregation included some builders' laborers from Ireland, so we did it very well, unskilled labor being contributed by our parish priest (in dungarees with his hair full of whitewash) and tea by the devout female sex.

Now it all looks very nice. We have the walls painted white and the doors and windows blue, which makes a good background for such statues as we managed to salvage and for the stations of the cross, and the baldachin is gold. We also have a fine crucifix over the altar and a Saint Joseph by a living sculptor.

But, said a Sister of Charity sadly, she was sure they were very clever, but no, they were not devotional. I was sorry to hear it. I am never quite sure whether a work of art is devotional or not, though it seems that most of the good ones are not, unless they were painted in the Middle Ages. As a matter of fact I greatly admire the sculptor who made our two new images. He is a fine craftsman and an exemplary Catholic, so his work certainly ought to have the right feeling. It is dignified, sensitive and a little austere. I simply do not see what the things one gets from the repository have which his work has not. I suppose we are so used to the things from the repository that we do not see them.

What do we mean by devotional art? I have purposely not called it liturgical art, because I am talking quite as much about the pictures we have in our homes and the holy pictures in our prayer books as I am of actual church furniture. What is its purpose? Its purpose is to tell us more about Our Lord and the saints, to make our churches as beautiful as we can, and to remind us of our Faith. It is not to lull us into a state of cozy infancy—an escape from life. Granted that we do not know what Our Lord and His Mother looked like (though we do know what Saint Therese of Lisieux looked like) but most of us could hazard a guess that they were not at all like the mass-produced statues which are supposed to represent them. They tell us nothing at all. Even worse, they grossly misrepresent their subjects, suggesting that the saints were bloodless, milk-and-water creatures—faintly perverse and rather unhealthy, an idea which is only too prevalent among those who have not read much in the lives of the saints. Compare them with

the paintings of El Greco or the sculpture round Chartres Cathedral and you will see what I mean. El Greco's saints are on fire with the love of God. The light round their heads seems to have broken out from the fire within, the charity that burns them up. The saints round Chartres Cathedral are—what every saint really is—men and women grown to their full stature, their sharp corners and irregularities, their strong personal characteristics, brought to harmony and crowned with supernatural glory—not ironed out and smudged over till any one of them might be any other, like the saints on the holy pictures we keep in our prayer books. The thirteenth century did not aim at photography but its portraiture was magnificent, and it painted character, not just features. If we had aimed even at mere historical accuracy we should have got something, though a relatively trivial thing, but we miss the point at both ways. The stations of the cross are usually so muddled that no one can see what any of them are about. Once when we were young and inexperienced we conscientiously made the stations in a badly lit church, and discovered at, I believe, the twelfth, that we had begun at the wrong end. After that we went to Westminster Cathedral, where the stations, being the work of Eric Gill, were clearly visible, besides being extremely beautiful, and have appropriate texts on them which provide much food for thought. It is not that many people think they are not devotional either.

With regard to the other purposes of devotional art, I suppose that what we have does remind us of our Faith—so does the work of the old masters, if you look at the pictures and stop worrying about who painted them and what school they belong to; but the more we say about beautifying our churches the better. True, many churches were built with insufficient money, though actually the poorest and plainest are not by any means the ugliest, but good colors well arranged cost no more than ugly colors put on anyhow and fiddled over with fussy little patterns. One mixes colors with insensibility, not radium.

The reason why modern Catholic church art is bad is not because it is mass produced. Mass-produced objects can be good in design and color, and mass production might have brought the best work within the reach of everyone. Moreover, a hand-made article may be simply ghastly. The real fault, greater than actual ugliness, is that it tells us nothing about its subjects, or that if it does it tells it all wrong. It does not, in fact, fulfil its purpose in making our religion come alive to us. It does not help the beginner to understand the Faith, and since we live in a pagan world this is serious. We are missing a great opportunity. We



owe it to non-Catholics to give them, where possible, true ideas about the Church, not false ones.

It is often said that innovations would disturb simple souls that they love our churches as they are, and can see through the tawdry exteriors. Yes, but do they love its badness or its familiarity? If they were accustomed to better things wouldn't they love them just as much? If they can see through tawdriness (worse, hyper-refinement) would they find something more mature a stumbling block? An experienced secular priest was appointed to a very beautiful, modern Gothic church in a London suburb. I believe it was one of Pugin's. He was a man of learning and wide culture, but his predecessor had not been, and so he set about a number of alterations inside the church. These included hanging two very beautiful old lamps he had found in an antique shop in one of the chapels and the addition of a really lovely modern stained glass window. The alterations were not of a wildly revolutionary nature, and were in keeping with the main building, and the congregation very soon got used to them and liked them. Besides, the Church does not only consist of simple and devoted souls, but of awkward and restless ones, and souls with enquiring minds and disorderly wills, and the world does not only consist of Catholics, but of non-Catholics and ex-Catholics and anti-Catholics. Not all these people are outside the Church because they are wicked. Some (even the ex-Catholics) are there because they have heard the Faith explained so badly that it sounds like nonsense. In literature, thanks to the work of certain Catholic publishers, the position is much better. Everyone who is literate, even if he does not subscribe to her doctrines, knows that the Church has something to say, but they have to swallow hard and shut their eyes when they come into our churches and hear the hymns. One can hardly blame them sometimes for thinking religion is a kind of dope, and has nothing to say to them. And great many people do not read if they can help it.

Now, heaven forbid that our churches should ever become "arty." Better far that they should be like back parlors, which are at least homely, and bad lighting covers a multitude of sins. When we advocate decorating our churches with the work of responsible craftsmen we are sometimes reminded of specific examples which certainly lack popular appeal—churches as bare factories, all straight lines and wide open spaces. We are told that popular taste is bad now, and there is nothing that can be done about it. It is the fault of our industrial civilization, and people do not appreciate good things when they see and hear them. W

is I do not entirely agree. There is a great deal of bad taste about (there probably always was) and it is not confined to the uncultured. Moreover, there has been in the last twenty or thirty years a great revival of interest in classical music (and to a less degree in the other arts), among people who never had the chance to learn to appreciate it at all, and this has grown up with the spread of radio, which has made it possible for everyone to hear. Many of them heard it by accident at first, because they forgot to switch over, or because the walls were thin, and they gradually came to like it. The two shilling stands at the Albert Hall concerts are not filled entirely with students and intellectuals (these usually pay for seats). The National Gallery is now quite well attended, which it never used to be, and I am quite sure that if you took a miner and showed him the stained glass in the Sainte Chapelle in Paris he would not complain that he did not understand that kind of thing. Stained glass was designed for people like him. The uneducated mind does not appreciate all art, and a range of taste is apt to be limited to the simple, the sensuous and the rather obvious—tuppence colored, in fact. But tuppence colored is not necessarily bad. Indeed it is often very good. Pictures and music which are simple and have an immediate appeal are not necessarily bad; as a matter of fact bad art of any kind is usually full of messy little fussinesses. The great thing is to say quite unmistakably what you have to say. This applies to ultra modern and abstract art too. An abstract painting should be a good abstract design—and you should not be wondering all the time what it is about, if anything. It isn't. Actually, these forms are entirely unsuited to devotional art (though I have seen attempts at it). The artists are speaking a private language among friends, and the proper place for private languages is at home, and the proper place for abstractions is in the study.

Actually, it is probably best to avoid all mannerisms and speak in the language of our own time. Even the style of a classic age such as the thirteenth century tends to make one's subject look remote and unreal; a survival and not a vital force. Though it may be easy to put back the clock you have not thereby put back time, and the clock will be misleading thereafter. When we speak we should speak in the tongue of our own time—which is a fine flexible tongue, in the hands of a master, and when we paint we should paint in the manner of our own time. We have technical resources which the thirteenth century had not. We should rid ourselves of Ruskin's idea that there is something holy about Gothic. We would not write books in old English, because we

should not feel at home in it, and we cannot really paint in the manner of a past age either. Even though fine work has been produced in this way it is still a mistake. The only way to paint religious pictures is as well as you know how, grappling with technical problems as they arise and finding which technique says what you have to say with least waste of time; clearly, colorfully, and straight to the point. It should be dignified and harmonious, but not so dignified as to be remote or so suave as to falsify the subject. Skillful use of discord may drive home a point and heighten drama. In the best sense of the work it should be true to life—true to spiritual values rather than facts.

Work of this kind may be a valuable kind of Catholic action. We live in an age when men are accustomed to be appealed to through the senses rather than the reason. By all means let us help them to get their reason back, but make friends of the senses too, not enemies. We also live, and it cannot be rubbed in too hard, in a non-Catholic world. We live among people who do not know the Faith, and this is true even of some of those who ought to know it. A lively and popular Catholic art could greatly help them to understand it.

In this the real difficulty is to get one's work seen. We have ourselves been through this particular purgatory. Perhaps a really competent artist would manage to be seen, but competition is keen, and not always on a sound basis. Too often the latest freak gets the publicity. Let us then throw them all out of the window—the picture dealers, the men with galleries, the art clubs, the art editors, the publishers (only more tenderly—they have other uses), and clear decks. Let us do our own holy pictures. The children will be only too glad to join in. Let us get rid of the feeling that only people who draw from the antique and idled through five years in an art school, and know the right kind of noises to make in front of Picasso can draw. Most of them cannot, as it happens, except parrot fashion. During the war, when the air offensive slackened, the Civil Defense personnel grew tired of playing darts, and started classes. One of them was an art class. A number of whole timers had been artists before their jobs left them at the beginning of the war, but anyone could come and quite a number joined us who had always thought it would be nice to draw but never had learned. There were firemen, police, first aiders, wardens, and all sorts of odd people who got roped in. After some time spent wandering about from one first-aid post to another we came to roost in the top room of a men's institute, where we splashed about with poster colors as happy as sandboys.



We were lucky in our master, who let us do what we liked as long as we worked, and some very good work was produced too, especially by the complete novices who did not mind making fools of themselves. Some of it got into exhibitions.

It is in such an atmosphere as this that the new Catholic art might be born. It would probably be wise to leave the building of churches and the illustration and printing of books to professionals, since they bristle with technical problems beyond the scope of amateurs, but we can do a good deal in our homes, and our products would certainly be no worse than the ones we now buy, as bad, and they would be what we ourselves think and feel instead of what a machine could not think and feel. A frieze round the bedroom illustrating the life of Saint Francis might be tried, and there is always the Christmas crib. We might try making the figures and then dressing them in bits of material, as a very accomplished English artist does. Our efforts will probably be crude, but so were the paintings in the catacombs crude but they must have been lovely when they were new, and are good to look at now.

And there is another thing. You cannot try to paint anything without beginning to think about it, and finding out a great deal you never knew before. Your observation becomes far more acute, your taste more varied, and your perception more sensitive. And it is a very good thing for a cog in the wheel to be able to paint angels in his spare time.

C. M. LARKINS  
*London, England*



**"LOOK, NO HANDS!"**

# The Brownies and The *Bourgeoisie*

*The President received Amir Saud, heir-apparent to the throne of Saudi Arabia, and gave the Crown Prince an autographed picture in return for a jeweled sword and dagger.*

*Princess Achraf of Iran received a legion of merit medal from President Truman at Washington yesterday for her brother, Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran, in recognition of his aid to the Allies in World War II. The President gave her an autographed photograph also for her brother.*

This lavish expenditure of autographed photographs of the First Citizen of the United States (the above examples are but a few of many such touching episodes) serves to emphasize the overwhelming importance and value attached to the photograph—the relatively cheap and plentiful image of oneself, in the lives of most Americans from the President right on down to the most humble customer of the dime store “3 for 25¢” photo booth.

Consider the life of the average American and the interminable recording of it in photographic film. The magic words “Watch the birdie,” echo down the years from womb to tomb.

It is still considered unconventional (at this writing) to record the actual birth of little Rollo on film, but as soon as possible after that fairly private event, Daddy with his Brownie and Uncle Bill with his movie camera are busy taking pictures of Rollo's inactivity. Perhaps the professional portrait photographer is called in also, but if he doesn't personally come to little Rollo in his crib, Rollo is taken to him as soon as he is able to sit up.

Periodically Rollo's growth and progress are recorded with more studio portraits—Rollo at two years, Rollo at two years and five months, Rollo at three years, etc. The gaps are filled in by Daddy's Brownie—Rollo's First Step, Rollo's Second Christmas, Rollo's New Bicycle, Rollo at the Zoo, etc.

When Rollo starts to school, his class has a group picture taken every spring. A sidewalk photographer snaps Rollo and his mother downtown shopping. Rollo soon has his own camera and begins recording his life. His family orders a large high school graduation picture of Rollo for their home, a dozen or so slightly smaller portraits to distribute to friends and relatives, some small pictures for Rollo to exchange with classmates, a large composite picture of all the members of his class, and perhaps some photo stamps so he can paste his lovable image on anything he wishes—from books to streetcar windows.

At college Rollo incidentally takes a short course in amateur photography. His snapshots of campus life make a thick scrapbook. His official college graduation photograph is likewise placed on the family hearth and passed out to friends and relatives to keep everyone up to date.

Looking for a job, Rollo has to have some small passport-size photos to send in with applications. Personnel directors like to know what they are hiring. They hire Rollo. On his vacation he takes moving pictures and snapshots of Rollo at the Grand Canyon, Rollo camping in Michigan. (When Rollo wants to get into the picture, as he invariably does, he allows a friend to hold the camera.) "Look at these shots. This is me at Lake Winnihaha. Here I am with the 10-pound barracuda I caught."

Rollo meets Alfreda, his dream girl. First thing they do is exchange photographs so that each may gaze soulfully at the other when they are apart. The courtship is recorded by Brownie movie camera—the picnics, the travels, the front-porch sittings, an occasional nightclub, where photographers are as much a part of the service as hatcheck girls, Rollo and Alfreda are snapped gazing vacuously over their gin. But this is nothing to what happens on the happy wedding day itself.

Photographers are there bright and early to snap Alfreda sitting on her bridal gown, departing for church, arriving at church. Here relatives also start taking pictures. The church is sooned with the professional recorders of the glad occasion. (It is possible to have phonograph records made of the exchange of vows, but Rollo and Alfreda reluctantly dispense with this service.) Alfreda is snapped coming down the aisle, meeting Rollo, murmuring "I do," receiving her ring. There are closeups and panoramas of the church and the ceremony, then the beaming professional, the congratulations, the kisses, the departures. Shots of the breakfast festivities. Then a long and arduous series of posed, formal pictures of the entire wedding party. Pictures of the reception—toasts, cake-cutting, dancing. The commercial cameramen finally see the bride and groom off on their honeymoon, leaving guests to wonder if the whole wedding hasn't been staged solely for the benefit of photographers.

This ends the professional wedding coverage, but the task of recording the honeymoon is now taken up by Rollo and Alfreda themselves. They come back with stacks of snapshots and reels of movies that all look the same except for the fact that some are colored and some are black and white. Their audiences can, if they



look closely, however, see behind Rollo's grin and Alfreda's demure smile, a glimpse of Niagara Falls or New Orleans.

Pretty soon Rollo and Alfreda begin recording the lives of their offspring just as systematically and rigorously as their lives have been recorded. But Rollo and Alfreda don't stop here with their own photographic records. They are still fodder for many a family album. Their fondest dreams are realized when they are eventually able to build and equip their own darkroom, to own and operate a movie projector second to none.

Rollo's camera mania has deep roots in the past and probably began when the first caveman scratched pictures of himself on the cave walls. But its immediate history and development began with the Renaissance.

The early Christian church frowned on portrait painting, restricting portraits and images to highly stylized types, mainly in deference to the second commandment, "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them."

Human nature being what it is, there was a recognized danger in the worship of self. But the Western world chipped away at these prohibitions slowly and surely. In the thirteenth century Giotto's frescoes of religious subjects began to portray groups of his friends posed as spectators. Other artists began putting their self-portraits in religious and church art in the fourteenth century. They adroitly turned sacred tradition to their purposes. There was, for instance, a legend that Saint Luke had painted the Blessed Virgin. So early in the fifteenth century many artists used this as an excuse to paint portraits of themselves, posing as Saint Luke painting the Virgin.

Most religions invariably fought the possible glorification of man through self-portraits and images. Ancient Egypt's extremely stylized portraits and images were the result of priestly rules and regulations against individualization. Some sources say that Phidias, famous sculptor of ancient Greece, was put to death because he eased his self-portrait into sacred art. Mohammedan art was noted for its geometrical design and arabesques principally because the Islamic religion forbade not only the representation of human beings, but animals as well. But now in Western Christendom, the medieval time of God-worship was swept away by the Renaissance and its man-worship. The Reformation, following

ated the seed of rugged individualism which, nurtured through centuries, inevitably produced soulless, mechanical collectivism. He became so enthralled by his image that the less god-like he became, the more he thought he was a god.

One of the outstanding characteristics of this new religion of humanism and its birth period, the Renaissance, was the growing importance of the portrait and portrait painter. The moneyed aristocracy flocked to portrait painters, and were joined, as time went on, by the wealthier *bourgeoisie*. But the less wealthy people, for perforce went without painted portraits, were eventually to come into their own with the development of the camera, the invention of which coincides with that of the *bourgeoisie* itself, and the extension of which curiously crowned bourgeois ascendancy. The *bourgeoisie*, born in the sixteenth century with the Reformation, matured in the seventeenth century, "enlightened" in the eighteenth century, and triumphant in the nineteenth century, found in the new photography a relatively cheap and abundant method of securing their own portraits, not painted of course, but as acceptable and desirable. In the United States particularly, the *bourgeoisie* swarmed into the photographer's studio. By 1870 family albums were stock entertainment for visitors; all respectable homes were hung with camera portraits of wooden-looking natives. Every town, big or little, harbored at least one professional portrait photographer, indeed those early photographers had usually no other function than to record the human image. Isolated settlements were visited by itinerant photographers.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States was predominantly bourgeois or middle class. The upper middle and "middle" middle classes, who had availed themselves of daguerreotypes and tintypes, now began to mass-produce their cultural trappings for the lower middle class and the completely unclassed fringe at the bottom of the heap. For these less affluent groups came the box camera and the roll film. In 1900 came the Kodak camera—small, simple, selling for as little as one dollar. By 1912 there were 3,000,000 camera fans on the loose in the United States. Today there are an estimated 25,000,000 amateur photographers in this fair land, where every corner drugstore sells and processes film, and "amateur" tastes can be indulged with cameras ranging in price from this one dollar or less on up into hundreds of dollars. The ranks of professional portrait photographers have grown to fantastic proportions. Any man who objects to having his picture taken now is considered either hope-

lessly daft or probably a fugitive from justice. The Brownies and the *bourgeoisie* have become inseparable.

What accounts for this tremendous growth of the camera cult in America? Partly, of course, it is the usual story of commercial exploitation. The amateur photographer has been trained to spend \$150,000,000 a year for film, cameras and supplies, and \$50,000,000 for developing, printing and services. The manufacture and distribution of photographic materials is now one of the world's big businesses. Large scale operations were developed in the United States, Britain, France and Germany. Whatever is left of this empire in Europe today, it is safe to say that the United States has taken the lead in the industry, having increased production three times since 1939 alone until it now conducts a half-billion-dollar photographic business annually.

Although manufacturers count on the amateur to provide only one third of their business, a leading United States photographic manufacturer, a \$300,000,000 corporation, spent the greater portion of its 1947 research budget (\$3,500,000) and the major efforts of its 500-man laboratory staff further to develop the simple cameras and cheap, easy film processes necessary to enlarge the amateur market.

Then there is the unfailing appeal of camera gadgetry to the average mechanically-minded American. An array of filters, cameras, lenses, range finders, exposure meters and darkroom equipment is irresistible to a nation long bug-eyed over everything mechanical from the airplane to the automatic cigaret roller. The creative urge must also receive some credit for camera appeal. The ordinary fellow cannot paint a picture, but he can take a picture with his camera. All he has to do is push the button and he figures he has created a picture just as surely as the gifted artist toiling over his canvas. The amateur photographer believes that if he can get milk out of a can, he can get art out of a camera.

Man's unquenchable vanity accounts for camera popularity to a great extent. Never before in history have men had so many facilities that they have today to pamper their narcissistic tendencies. Modern narcissism—just plain self-infatuation, not the Freudian twist of this term with its erotic overtones—steadily grows more insurmountable. As Narcissus once fell in love with his reflection in a fountain, so men have fallen in love with their reflections in a photo album.

The basic reason for the camera's vast popularity, however, is not commercial exploitation, love of gadgets, the creative urge



human vanity. It is simpler and more obvious: the camera has been seized upon by the average citizen as a means of recording life and times, right down to the most intimate details. In 1960 at least, the family used to get dressed in its best and trot off to the photographer for a group picture to hang in the parlor. Now the camera comes to the home, the church, the school, the office, the dinner. The lens leers into the baby's crib, the old man's coffin—inexorably grinding out a record of life. The camera is infallible in this world of fallibility.

Perhaps Americans cling to recording everything by photography because they, more than any other less "progressive" people, "never go back." All material aspects of their life are changed so quickly in their search for the good, the true and the negotiable, that nothing is ever the same again except in their picture albums and 16mm. movie reels. The sentimental thing to do is to go back, to re-live everything as it once was. And Americans are nothing but sentimental. Also, as even their camera mania shows, they are immature and given to secret twinges of inferiority in spite of their vaunted material accomplishments. They are afraid to depend on something as intangible as memory, imagination, mere words, to recreate their past experiences. They would rather have a picture than ten thousand words. So they take pictures, pictures and more pictures.

... The bar where you met has been completely remodelled, although you met there only six months ago. Good thing you have your pictures taken at the time. The park you used to walk in has an entirely different class of people frequenting it now, and it just isn't the same—except in these snapshots. The house where you were born has either been torn down or lost in the slums. You can't go home again, but you can page through your photograph album. . . .

Is photography merely a harmless, expensive-cheap method of recording the hectic life of a harried people, just for the sake of recording it? Why are Americans so eager to set down their activities and their images on film? Fundamentally, it is a means of identification that enables Rollo to look at his picture and say "This is me!" It is their way of proving to themselves that they exist, that they are individuals, that they are real. They are seeking a glimpse of their personality, their spiritual essence, but usually they expect to find it through tangible media. The bourgeoisie embarked on a journey to "free" men, to let them know themselves, to explore their individuality. And men are still seeking for themselves. They have brought their material culture

to the zenith and multiplied all their material means for finding their personalities, but the further they pursue this line of inquiry the more submerged their personalities become.

The camera is but one aspect of their soul-hunt. They buy all that money can buy: photo booths in dime stores, bus stations, street corners that present them with framed photographs seconds after they push the buttons; phonograph recording booths where they can "preserve" their voices for thirty-five cents; a "sound mirror" that "records and plays back thirty full uninterrupted minutes of music, speech or fun"; portrait photographers who "glamour portraits all but breathe"; "sound recordings of funeral services as keepsakes for the bereaved." At the New York World Fair, Americans nearly trampled each other in their desire to have the courtesy of Bell, their own voices as they sound on the telephone to others.

Vicariously they enjoy the recording of life provided by the moving picture, the television set, the picture magazine, and the radio come away with new angles, new ideas for their own recording spree. Every week 18,000,000 moviegoers purchase an average of three tickets apiece to see "life as she is lived" a la Hollywood. There are now around 400,000 television sets in American homes and by 1953 at least 11,000,000 dwellings are expected to share these mechanisms, thus allowing millions to *see* life more clearly. *Look, Click, Pic—Life!* The picture magazines dominate the "reading" field. *Life as Life* sees it reaches between 25,000,000 and 30,000,000 people weekly through a circulation of over 5,000,000.

Are these things just mass-produced toys, playthings, diversions, hobbies? They might look like it on the surface, but actually they represent a serious, unconscious effort of man to see his soul to give some meaning to his shrivelled life. For the American nothing, including himself, exists unless he can see it. His attitude is that of Stanley Walker's editor who sent a cub reporter out to cover the Johnstown Flood. Eager to make an impression with his richest prose, the cub sent back a lyrical news story of great beauty which began, "God stands today on a hill overlooking Johnstown, His heart full of pity . . ." The editor wired back "Interview God and get pictures."

The people who need birth certificates to prove that they were born also need photographs to prove that they exist. This is the inevitable cul-de-sac of a nation given over so wholeheartedly to materialism. Seeking permanence and stability, they put their trust in material things which perish, ignoring things of the spirit.

at remain through time and eternity. Rather than seek their personality in God, whence it has come and only in relation to whom it can have any meaning, they have turned to recording their material existence, in hopes that the actual recording of it will endow it with meaning of a permanent, that is spiritual, nature. Pictures of themselves, they feel, make them exist in the only way they recognize existence, make them immortal in the only way they recognize immortality.

Paradoxically—and this is the cream of the tragedy—man conducting this frantic search for his individual personality by mechanical means. Disregarding his Creator, he is trying to recreate his personality through the machine, the very agent that has been busily completing the abysmal destruction of his personality. Modern man, turned from contemplation of God to the contemplation of himself by the Renaissance and its "humanism," has been steadily de-personalized, oppressed, regimented, standardized and all but obliterated by the machine and its inhumanism. The machine demands that man assume its image; but man, created to the image and likeness of God, cannot become such an image, for to do so would be equivalent to his extermination." These machines to which he looks cannot create a man, but this never occurs to him, so convinced is he that machines can produce anything and everything. The machine merely produces a vacuum of animality, loneliness and despair in which to imprison this rootless, hollow man.

And there he prowls about with his cameras and his flash bulbs in the darkness, seeking a way out, seeking to extract out of the faceless mass of humanity, his face, his personality. Though he be born again of hypo and developer, enlarged and retouched, mounted and gold-framed, without God he is but paper.

N. A. KRAUSE

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## ***The Trappists Are Very Grateful***

For the generous response INTEGRITY's readers have made to their appeal for new or second-hand books for their library at the Abbey of Our Lady of the Valley, in Valley Falls, Rhode Island. We have been reminded by the Brother Librarian that the reading habits of monks are not *quite* so rigid as the appeal in INTEGRITY (July 1948) might lead you to believe. For that reason we repeat the appeal and ask you to send *any* good book on religion, the sciences, history, art—on anything, in fact, *except fiction*. Please send your donations of books to William Cobb, c/o ALDNY, INC., 37-28 30th Street, Long Island City, New York.



## BOOK REVIEWS

### It Don't Come Naturally

YOU CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

By James Keller, M.M.  
Longmans, \$3.00

This is the handbook of the Christopher movement, and it deserves some careful attention—  
if only because the Christopher movement has, through its ready,

appeal and the enthusiastic lecturing of its founder, Father Keller, captured the zeal and idealism of thousands upon thousands of American Catholics. The book is very much like Father Keller's speeches. Its framework and most of its matter consists in stories, beginning "A young Negro . . ." "Two business men in a restaurant in Chicago . . ." or "A young man who once studied for the ministry in California . . ." Of almost equal importance are the quotations; Father Keller quotes rabbis, ministers, Dr. Gallup, labor leaders, editors, manufacturers, presidents of broadcasting companies, editors of Protestant (and anti-Catholic) newspapers, columnists—nearly anyone and everyone. With all the stories and quotations there is little room for anything else, and there is very little else. In parts there is quite a bit of pedestrian research data, about such things as the number of people murdered annually in the United States or the kinds of agencies that take trained social workers. Father Keller does not argue from principle, so do not expect a reasoned, philosophical analysis of the times. Such principles as the book contains are chiefly to be found in headings, either gratuitously assumed or derived from case histories. In general tone and makeup, as well as in the burden of its message, *You Can Change the World* has a strong odor of Dale Carnegie about it. And as with Dale Carnegie too, it is a little hard to pin the author down to any particular thesis. There is hardly a modern cliché or pious slogan that does not appear in the book some place. All that a reviewer can do is to take the all-over thesis that the book conveys to him, and examine it in the light of the lay apostolate. If some people object to this interpretation, pointing to this passage or that (which they easily can because the book touches on nearly everything, even where some of the things contradict each other) the reviewer has no defense against them, save to say he was trying to be fair according to the light of his knowledge.

Let me say, then, that with Father Keller's most fundamental thesis I agree. We both think the laity should be apostolic, that they should get into the market place (although we differ in our interpretation of this) and that they should widen their vision and think big. The Christopher theory is that each one of us should become a "Christ-bearer," that we should accentuate the positive, that lay people should get into the jobs which count most in terms of influence (education, government, labor management and publishing) even at a financial sacrifice. Father Keller seems to imply that no organization is necessary for the apostolate. At any rate, Christophers are unorganized although they are urged to join existent organizations in order to influence them.

My chief grievance against the Christophers is that they shy away from the implications of being Christ-bearers. The appellation ought to

ply the fullness of the doctrine that we are *other Christs*, according to which we must become instruments by which Christ continuously reconquers the world through grace. As the supernatural virtues and gifts progressively increase in us, and sanctify us, Christ is manifested to the world and draws men to Him. Our role is to be crucified in the process, giving our lives to gain life, and becoming the instrumental cause of the conversion of our neighbor and the sanctification of the temporal order. In this way effective Christophers are rare, as saints are rare, and the total change of the world a very difficult process, founded on a succession of calvaries. That does not mean a multitude of people are not called to the apostolate; in our day that seems exactly to be the case. But it does mean that the essential struggle is the same as always and it would be wrong to minimize the sacrifice involved.

There is another sort of "good work" which is much easier than the way of the cross through supernatural grace, and this is the way of natural virtue, activity and enthusiasm—a little kindness here, some cheering words there, some letters to congressmen, an apt word at a labor meeting. It is one of the Christian mysteries that whereas all these things are good, they add up to just so much sound and fury, changing precious little, unless they have deep roots in a higher life. Surely Father Keller knows this better than I. Yet this book seems to cling to the natural level of goodness and to place undue hope of real accomplishment therein. Occasionally the supernatural life is mentioned, but not very often, and there is no real stress put on frequenting the Sacraments. The Declaration of Independence seems almost interchangeable with the Ten Commandments, and the defense of American democracy nearly synonymous with the defense of the Church. It is not made at all clear that *you* can change the world is true if by it we mean Christ can change the world if we will allow Him to act through us.

In view of the above it is not surprising that this book seems superficial. It is written with a lot of exclamation points and emotionalism, and you're liable to find a lump rising in your throat because young Henry Ford says "Good Morning" to some of his least employees. Now it's nice that he does so, but neither Henry Ford nor Father Keller is even thinking in terms of the major problems of industrialism. In fact, here are some of the points where Father Keller's prejudices show. There's nothing wrong with industrial capitalism, according to him. There are selfish capitalists but it's always a personal sin which has not been incorporated essentially into the system. On the other hand there is nothing too awful to be said against the communists. They are "the subversives," and they must be driven back at all costs. Father Keller never sees them as God's scourge for our sins, as Our Lady implied at Fatima.

Besides sticking pretty close to the natural and the superficial, it cannot escape one's notice that Father Keller's plan is a little naive. I have felt this for a long time, as I listened to the glib advice he has been giving the young, and now I am sure of it. Father Keller's knowledge of the fields he commends his Christophers going into does not come from experience, much less from wisdom. He describes job opportunities in these fields in

the book. It's an unenlightened research job, without any real understanding of what goes on. In publishing he is particularly naive. Because virtually all secular publishing is oriented to profit, much of the material spewed out by the presses is either pornographic or atheistic. How can a Catholic cooperate in spreading this error and obscenity? This problem, which shrieks at anyone entering the publishing field, is not even touched on by Father Keller. Furthermore, in advising young writers, he tells them that the majority of editors definitely do want good material to be submitted for publication. Although "good" is not defined, still and all, one gets the impression that *The Ladies Home Journal* and similar large magazines are aching for some idealistic young writer to write something godly. One suspects that Father Keller's knowledge of publishing is limited to expensive lunches with well-heeled executives by whose pious chatter he has been taken in. In this same chapter, incidentally, we are told both that Hollywood is crying for decent scenario material (one studio found only six manuscripts out of two hundred submitted to have even faint screen possibilities) and that leading Hollywood studios never open unsolicited manuscripts. The chapter on social work is again naive. It's about a thousand light years removed from coming to grips with the real problems of the field such as we of INTEGRITY (I say this without boasting, but by way of contrast) tackled in an issue about six months ago. One interesting note is that Father Keller avoids attacking Freud. Freud is never mentioned by name, though his teachings are once adverted to as a materialistic philosophy which can lead to Marxism. For Father Keller and others of the sweetness and light school there is only one enemy: communism.

Conspicuous by its absence in this whole book is any mention whatever of the lay apostolate other than the Christopher movement. Now it happens that holiness and prayer and sacrifice and souls' struggles have gone into the understanding and launching of the modern lay apostolate. Yet Catholic Action, the Legion of Mary, Friendship House, the Catholic Worker, and other organizations might just as well have never existed for all that Father Keller pays any attention to them. All these have found it very hard to bring Christ to the modern world, because they required the transformation of the lay people themselves, the working out of a proper technique, and the laborious business of attaining to harmony of action in their own organized groups. But Father Keller has suddenly found that the whole thing is easy and no organization is necessary. Whoever has worked in the modern situation has discovered the necessity of organization, which also has strong papal support. It will be pity if Father Keller whips up the enthusiasm of the nation (and he undoubtedly does whip up enthusiasm) only to have it quickly burn out for lack of spiritual substance and because of unrealism in viewing the modern world.

PETER MICHAELS



## Better Churches

### CHURCHES: THEIR PLAN AND FURNISHINGS

By Peter F. Anson

Revised and Edited by Very Rev. Msgr.

T. F. Croft-Fraser, Chief Master of Ceremonies  
of the Vatican Basilica,  
and Rev. H. A. Reinhold

Bruce \$6.50

This book is delightfully written and beautifully illustrated by the author with the practical purpose of being a guide in the building

and remodeling of churches. You will enjoy the hundreds of drawings of everything in a church, from chalices to altars, and churches of many countries. "Mistakes in planning and furnishing a church are obvious ignorance of the functional requirements, in other words of the purposes of a modern church." This book, giving the canon law for all the plans and furnishings, is such easy reading that ignorance can no longer be an excuse.

Father Reinhold's notes are very pertinent and helpful. His long friendship with the author gives the book a warmth and unity when he comments to clarify or "mildly disagree." Father thinks "priests, architects, seminarians and sacristans will find it safe and instructive." May I add *all* people who go to church would learn a lot they have always wanted to know, but for lay apostles and artists who hope to have the privilege of signing for a church, it is a *must*. For the pastor who is contemplating building a church it will be invaluable. The price will keep most of us from being able to buy it, though it is worth it if only for the drawings. It should be in every school, college, parish and community library. It is a bibliography and index for reference. I hope a more inexpensive edition will be put out so everyone can buy it.

How do you feel about your church? Does it mean *just* Sunday Mass and your favorite shrine the rest of the week? Why is it that shrines take precedence over the altar so that it is usual to see people lighting candles during the most sacred parts of the Mass. In Rome candles are forbidden. During Mass in my parish I wish it were forbidden too! Shrines are fine if they should not be connected with any side altars but completely separate on pedestals or brackets. In some countries statues of the various saints are brought out a week before their feastday for devotions and then put away. I like this idea very much, for one thing it would not clutter up the churches so! Artificial flowers are forbidden in Rome. Somewhere in the book it says "In God's House everything should be real." That makes me so happy because I am so tired of plaster being made to look like marble or wood. Mr. Anson says "a church must be more than devotional, it must be liturgical, i.e. suitable for public worship." There is so much misunderstanding of what the liturgy is but all it means is the official worship of the Church, for example, the Mass, Benediction, Vespers. Novenas are not the liturgy, they are private devotions.

The church is built to protect the altar, which is "first and foremost a table but in too many churches it has become a dining room sideboard or power show." Most of us are so used to the table plus all that is on the table and back of it, we have clearly forgotten it is a table. Could this be why the *masses* have left the *Mass*? A "bad church to the author is one that is inconvenient to worship in" if his view of the altar is blocked by

shrines or decorations. While all of us will not build a church or even paint or carve for one, we should know what is right and wrong in Our Father's House. Only then can we protect it from any servants, through love and devotion to be sure, who have changed and moved things from where they should be. We are given all the essentials of a church, and it is surprising how few there are, though we are not told that is not all a church should have. Their histories are explained and there are drawings in every chapter of different types of good and bad altars, and every part of a church. The sanctuary, altar cloths, church furniture, the baptismal font, the confessionals, the organ, the vestments, the sacristy, the bells, lighting, heating and ventilation are just some of the subjects it discusses, as well as the use of porches (vestibules) for pamphlet rack, bulletin board, a room for parish societies to meet in (a godsend to our crowded rectories). Saint Charles Borromeo's descriptions of a church are quoted throughout the book.

For artists there are instructions as to what should be allowed in a church, nothing that "offends against decency" or is "unusual" or of an uncanonized saint. Unusual is explained as to its not being against church doctrine in its representation, not as some might misconstrue as to an unusual style. No painting or sculpture is permissible on the altar itself though it may be on the wall above, well beyond the crucifix.

There is mention of the native art that Pope Pius XII is so interested in developing. Father Reinhold has a note on "saviors looking like well-groomed preachers, all sweetness and commonness." Does our church inspire prayer? We should be appalled with Leon Bloy at the idea of a Madonna or a Christ that lacked the power to bring us down on our knees. My impressions of most mistakenly-called religious art in our churches is that I must close my eyes. My former sculptor-teacher Joseph de Creeft once told his students that the museum was the artist's church, and when I see what is allowed in our churches I have to flee to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. There, and at the Cloisters, I can see beautiful inspiring religious art of the Middle Ages. I don't think we should turn back the pages, and this book gives me hope. It says "the trouble with so many churches erected during the last century is that architects have been more concerned with the superficial 'beauty' than with the nature of the building. Very often they wanted to create a 'work of art' and ignored the fact that nothing can be a work of art if it does not properly fulfil its end. The Church is not a remnant of the Middle Ages or any other. She does not oblige us to erect buildings which create an atmosphere of bygone times, thus making it seem she belongs to a romantic or sentimental past, and shirks the hard task of Christianizing our day and generation. She is the eternally young and prolific Bride of the Spirit. Architects are these important apostles. They must announce the message of our times." Many of this book fall on good ground—architects and potential ones, artists and pastors! The limitations of canon law gives plenty of room to the creativity to construct beautiful and functional churches. A church should not look "alien in the midst of domestic blend in the surroundings whether it is city or town." Those who have traveled in New England are very aware that the non-Catholic churches sit harmoniously and modestly in the villages and the Catholic churches stand out like sore thumbs by not fitting in the communities.

We are given lovely bits of information like the expression "God's board" for altar. A third century chapel at Maria Laach had a gently sloping floor so every seat was equally good just like our modern movie houses! Father Reinhold begs sacristans not to polish sanctuary floors so they resemble skating rinks or dance floors. Advice is given to prolong life in flowers—by using salt, slightly crushing ends or clipping ends daily. Pulpit means stage or scaffold (perhaps according to the length of the sermon!). Confessionals in Holland have an opening like a mail slot for the passing of literature from priest to penitent.

One has the feeling if only our churches highlighted the altars as they should, till that happy day when the priest again faces the people while offering up Mass, people would learn to love the Mass. I remember the beauty of Father Lonergan's church in Clairton, Pennsylvania, outside of Pittsburgh, which was built by his parishioners, and how it united all the parish. We will not have great art in our churches until we have a strong faith and only a love for the Mass will give us that. According to Father Leo, the Stigmatist, "if Catholics only realized the importance God places in one Mass, they would willingly risk death to be at Mass every day when the Holy Sacrifice is offered to the Almighty." This is a long needed book. May the Holy Spirit inspire all who read it.

JULIA PORCELLI

## In the Thirteenth Century

THE CITY AND THE CATHEDRAL  
By Robert Gordon Anderson  
Longmans, \$3.50

Those who enjoyed the book *The Biography of A Cathedral* will delight in this sequel history by the same author. We are transported by Mr. Ander-

son into the tapestried pattern of medieval Paris and we walk its narrow streets in the company of the slim Saint Louis, king of his people, or visit the shops of the illuminators and needle-craftswomen in the company of quinas.

Whatever moral we may abstract from this enjoyable visit into the splendor of the past we do so without support from the man through whose eyes we see the living mosaic. His is the precision and whimsical curiosity of a man who glories in the ordinary and the commonplace. He peers endlessly into every nook and cranny of that beehive of God which occupied an area no larger than that of a Manhattan city block. The tiny details, which woven together constitute the thing we call culture, are the things he shows us.

For those who are less disinterested than the author there are lessons to be learned, and acquaintances to be cultivated in this immortal city on the Seine. These years he covers are the years of her glory. Here we see the strange sight of a German professor dominating the minds of Paris and of the world. This is Albert the Great, he who decreases so that one greater than he can increase, one Thomas of Aquin, beggar and cousin to the Emperor. The shadow of the little poor man, Francis of Assisi, is there. His brown garb rests well on the shoulders of the Seraphic Doctor on adventure. Roger Bacon is enchanted by alchemy and Louis of France holds an informal court of justice on a rug in his orchard, to which court come the beggars of Paris and the nobility of England.



The spires of that stone testament, the Cathedral of Our Lady, cast shadows into the chambers of illuminators, and above those curved back bits of paint and gold leaf glisten like sequins in the cobwebs. A matron who scrubs the floors of the Cathedral nave offers suggestions as to the proper expression befitting a child Jesus, and an illustrator learns humbly from one wiser than he.

We visit the lists and learn of the armorers' trade as Prince Philip waits beside the forge for his sword to be tempered. And what of the Greek who came bearing gifts—Aristotle? And what of the rules of weights and measures that make service the master of avarice in the marketplace? Mr. Anderson investigates all of these matters for us. He knows the pattern and every stitch of the pattern. He sees a hierarchy of personal desires, hopes and aspirations welling up to God beside the cool stone of the Cathedral, the Cathedral that has been left to us, to Jean Paul Sartre and to his despair.

The social order that we hope in the same spirit to achieve, will not be the same as this order; we can barely hope that it will be better, but, if it is Christian it can hardly be dissimilar.

ED WILLOCK

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### New Year's Eve

Let not the tumult fade;  
Enhance the din with song,  
With shouts minus meaning.  
Muffle not the motor of the world  
Rather, amplify the sound:  
Raise your voices,  
blow your horns,  
stamp your feet,  
clap your hands.  
Gather together and pool your uproars,  
Lest the voice of conscience  
Catch you off guard  
and remind you what you are  
and whither you are going;  
Lest contemplation invade the scene  
Of concerted chaos  
To pose a question:  
Is this the way?

WILLIAM MCNAMARA



## *Our New Year's Gift To You*

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